

UkraineAlert January 11, 2022 • 2:37pm ET

## Ukrainians call on US Senate to sanction Putin’s pipeline weapon

By Ukrainian civil society representatives



*Editor’s note: US senators are expected to vote in the coming days on a bill to introduce new sanctions against Russia’s Nord Stream 2 pipeline. The controversial energy infrastructure project had earlier been opposed by the US but the Biden Administration waived sanctions in May 2021 in a bid to repair ties with Russia’s pipeline partner Germany. On the eve of the vote, representatives of Ukrainian civil society have issued the following appeal calling on senators to back sanctions.*

As representatives of Ukrainian civil society, we call on the US Senate to back the new bill sanctioning the Nord Stream 2 pipeline and encourage the Biden Administration to swiftly provide Ukraine with defensive weapons.

In July 2021, the US and Germany **committed themselves** to “hold Russia to account for its aggression and malign activities by imposing costs via sanctions and other tools.” Since then, Russia has maliciously cut gas flows to European countries, contributing to the creation of an artificial gas shortage that caused gas prices to spike to record levels. This has threatened Europe’s ability to supply heat during the winter season. The US has responded by sending shipments of liquefied natural gas (LNG), reminiscent of the delivery of coal to West Berlin by airlift during the Soviet blockade in 1948-1949.

The revenues of Russian gas giant Gazprom last year approached the highs of 2013-2014. However, just as then, Russian President Vladimir Putin will use these profits not to improve the lives of Russians but to expand and modernize his armed forces and embark on new foreign policy ventures.

Since late October 2021, Russia has amassed more than 120,000 troops close to the Ukrainian border along with the logistical support for a major new offensive. This menacing build-up had been accompanied by increasingly belligerent rhetoric from senior Russian officials.

We believe the green light given to the Nord Stream 2 pipeline in May 2021 served as one of the key triggers for the current crisis and must be urgently revised. At present, Ukraine’s gas transit system is vital for the delivery of Russian

energy supplies to the EU market. Since the outbreak of Russian hostilities towards Ukraine in 2014, the need to keep this transit system operational has served as a critical deterrent against an escalation in Russian aggression.

However, the Kremlin has been working for many years to reduce this reliance by bypassing Ukraine with projects such as Nord Stream 1, TurkStream and Blue Stream. If Nord Stream 2 becomes operational, it will eliminate the deterrent value of Ukraine’s gas transit system and free Putin to expand his attack on the country.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken **claimed** on January 9 that if Russia renews its aggression against Ukraine, “it would certainly be difficult to see gas flowing through [Nord Stream 2] in the future.” We cannot agree. On the contrary, there are good reasons to believe that if Russia damages or destroys Ukraine’s gas transmission system, Germany will not halt Nord Stream 2. Indeed, Putin may be counting on it.

Germany could justify such a controversial decision by citing the lack of alternative pipeline routes and arguing for the need to address Russian aggression via dialogue and diplomacy. Kevin Kuehnert, a senior official from the Social Democratic Party (SPD) which leads Germany’s new coalition government, recently confirmed these fears, telling **Reuters** that Nord Stream 2 “should not be mixed up with responses to Russia’s territorial controversies with Ukraine.”



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There are many other reasons why Nord Stream 2 should be sanctioned. It undermines transatlantic unity as most Central and Eastern European countries oppose the project. The pipeline will make Europe more dependent on Russian gas and increase Putin’s geopolitical leverage over the continent, while violating EU energy legislation and the European Union’s Green Deal. It also contradicts the White House’s anti-corruption memorandum.

The coming days are a critical period for Europe. Putin is currently weighing up the risks and benefits of a dramatic escalation in his war against Ukraine, and Nord Stream 2 will play an important role in these calculations. It is critical to

deter him now before it is too late. Putin must be sent a clear and unambiguous message that Nord Stream 2 will not be allowed to enter service. We therefore urge the US Senate to adopt the new bill introducing sanctions on the pipeline.

We also call upon senators to encourage the Biden Administration to provide Ukraine as soon as possible with the necessary defensive weapons to help the country defend itself against Russian aggression. This should include anti-aircraft, anti-drone, and anti-sniper systems along with access to signals intelligence and satellite data.

Russian aggression against Ukraine is part of a mounting global confrontation between democracy and a resurgent brand of authoritarianism championed by Vladimir Putin. Nord Stream 2 is one of Putin's most important geopolitical weapons. By blocking this pipeline, the US can make an important contribution to protecting Ukrainian sovereignty and safeguarding European security while defending America's own national interests.

***Signatories***

**Hanna Hopko**, Head of the Rada Committee on Foreign Affairs (2014-2019), Board Member at the ANTS National Interests Advocacy Network

**Olena Halushka**, Board Member at the Anti-corruption Action Center

**Mykhailo Gonchar**, President of the Center for Global Studies "Strategy XXI", Adviser to the Secretary of the National Security and Defense Council (1996-2000)

**Gennadiy Kurochka**, Co-founder of Ukraine Crisis Media Center

**Lesia Matviychuk**, Head of the Board of the Center for Civil Liberties

**Mykhailo Zhernakov**, Chair of the Board of DEJURE Foundation, Judge of the Vinnytsia District Administrative Court (2012-2015)

**Olena Kravchenko**, Director of the International Charity Organization "Environment-People-Law"

**Ostap Yednak**, Secretary of the Rada Committee of Environmental Policy and Nature Protection (2014-2019), Board Member at the ANTS National Interests Advocacy Network

**Agiya Zagrebelska**, Head of the Board at the Antitrust League

**Ostap Kryvdyk**, Advisor to the Speaker of the Parliament of Ukraine (2016-2019), RCDS Member

**Olga Tokariuk**, Journalist, Nonresident Fellow at CEPA (Center for European Policy Analysis)

**Alya Shandra**, Chief Editor, Euromaidan Press

**Oksana Yurynets**, Professor of Lviv Polytechnic National University, Ukrainian MP (2014-2019), Former Chairwoman of the Ukrainian delegation to the NATO PA (2018-2019)

**Daria Kaleniuk**, Executive Director at the Anti-corruption Action Center

**Andriana Arekhta**, Veteran, Head of the Ukrainian Women Veteran Movement

**Natalika Popovych**, Co-founder of Ukraine Crisis Media Center

**Vasyl Myroshnychenko**, director of Ukrainian-British City Club

**Roman Bezsmertnyi**, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary (ret.)

**Maksym Kyiak**, Executive Director at the Institute for Central Europe, fellow at the Pennsylvania state government (USA, 2011)

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By Andriy Zagorodnyuk

Bolstering Ukraine's ability to wage an effective asymmetric campaign on home soil may be the most effective way to deter Russian President Vladimir Putin from launching a full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Conflict Defense Technologies



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**Europe's future will be decided in Ukraine**

By Oleksii Reznikov

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Conflict Economic Sanctions



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By Peter Dickinson

One depressing aspect of Russia's latest military build-up on the Ukrainian border has been the flurry of headlines posing the same question: will Putin invade Ukraine? In reality, Russia has already invaded Ukraine and the war is now in its eighth year.

Conflict Disinformation

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Image: US senators are expected to vote in the coming days on a bill to introduce new sanctions against Russia’s Nord Stream 2 pipeline. (image/Christian Ohde via Reuters Connect)

**Bill Browder and Former President Ilves counter German official and suggest Nord Stream 2 is a political and human rights matter**

Brittany Beaulieu <bbeaulieu@yorktownsolutions.com>

Wed 1/12/2022 3:30 PM

To: Brittany Beaulieu <bbeaulieu@yorktownsolutions.com>



**Bill Browder** ✓  
@Billbrowder

...

According to a German official from Gerhard Schroeder's SPD party "Nord Stream 2 pipeline to bring Russian gas to Germany should not be mixed up with political and human rights disputes with Moscow." Reminder: Gerrard Schroder is on the board of Gazprom!



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Hmmm.... A “strictly commercial project” with a state owned company run by Putin’s closest friend defended by a... \*Social Democrat”.

Strictly Commercial is one of those concepts I don’t associate with social democrats.



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Brittany Beaulieu  
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601 13th Street NW Suite 900S  
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# Opinion: How Biden is working to save Putin's pipeline

By Josh Rogin

Columnist

Yesterday at 3:03 p.m. EST



President Biden's national security team worked hard this week to defeat a GOP congressional effort to sanction a Russian-German energy project that will strengthen the hand of Russian President Vladimir Putin and weaken Ukraine at the worst possible time. This is only the latest in a series of moves that show how the Biden administration's actions are actually working to save the Nord Stream 2 pipeline, even though Biden's officials publicly claim to oppose it.

As early as Wednesday afternoon, the Senate will vote on a bill by Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Tex.) that would mandate U.S. sanctions on the company that owns and hopes to soon operate Nord Stream 2 — also known around Capitol Hill as the “the Molotov-Ribbentrop pipeline,” a derogatory reference to the 1939 nonaggression pact between Germany and the Soviet Union. The analogy is imperfect, but it does highlight what's at stake if the pipeline comes into operation. Germany's new chancellor, Olaf Scholz, is ill-advisedly calling for a “new beginning” with Russia that includes moving forward with the pipeline at the exact moment Putin is poised to re-invade Ukraine.

The Biden team is opposing the bill because it doesn't want to hand Cruz a win and because it wants to preserve the administration's diplomatic flexibility. The administration also seems to be prioritizing Germany's concerns over those of the Ukrainian government, which is warning that if the United States doesn't act now to stop the pipeline from becoming operational, Russia will gain the ability to bypass Ukraine's energy infrastructure, removing perhaps the last obstacle to a Russian military invasion. Last week, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky publicly asked U.S. senators to vote for the Cruz bill.

As my Post colleague Seung Min Kim reported on Wednesday, national security adviser Jake Sullivan, Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs Victoria Nuland and State Department energy special envoy Amos Hochstein have been personally pressing Democratic senators to oppose the Cruz bill. Meanwhile, administration officials worked with Senate Majority Leader Charles E. Schumer (N.Y.), Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Robert Menendez (N.J.) and other Democrats to introduce a competing bill that would authorize a larger package of sanctions, including sanctions on the Nord Stream 2 pipeline, but only in the event of a Russian attack.

In exchange for Cruz releasing his holds on Biden diplomatic nominees, Schumer promised him a stand-alone vote on his Nord Stream 2 bill. The Schumer-Menendez legislation isn't scheduled for a vote. Introducing it now seems geared to provide Democrats political cover to reverse their previous support for pipeline sanctions.

Some Democrats, including Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto (Nev.), will still vote for the Cruz bill, arguing that imposing

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But several other Democrats who have previously supported Nord Stream 2 sanctions are likely to vote against the Cruz bill. That will deny the GOP a political reward for holding Biden nominees hostage. The losers, however, are not the Republicans but the Ukrainians. On Tuesday, Ukrainian civil society representatives publicly asked the Senate to pass the Cruz bill.

The Biden administration insists it opposes the pipeline, but over the past nine months its actions have called that into question. In May, the United States waived sanctions on the firm in charge of the project, Nord Stream 2 AG, a Swiss company wholly owned by Russian energy giant Gazprom — even though Secretary of State Antony Blinken had promised during his confirmation hearing he was “determined to do whatever we can to prevent that completion.”

In June, Blinken then said the pipeline was a “fait accompli.” In July, the United States and Germany issued a joint statement pledging not to allow Russia to use the pipeline to cut out Ukraine and tighten its grip on Europe. But last week, standing alongside new German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock (who opposes the pipeline), Blinken argued that the pipeline provided leverage against Putin. If Putin invades, he said, Germany might not turn it on.


The Cruz bill “will undermine our efforts to deter Russia and remove leverage the United States and our allies and partners possess in this moment all to score political points at home,” National Security Council spokeswoman Emily Horne told me Wednesday. “And it would come at a moment where we need to be closely united with our European partners, including Germany.”

GOP Senate staffers point out that Scholz, who surely wants the domestic economic benefits Nord Stream 2 promises, has never promised to kill it if Putin invades, rendering a future threat of sanctions on the pipeline empty. In fact, Berlin would become even more dependent on Nord Stream 2 if a Russian attack on Ukraine were to cut off that country’s gas transit routes. The Ukrainians similarly don’t agree that Nord Stream 2 should be stopped only if Putin invades — and after the invasion they fear it might be too late.

Blinken and Nuland actually once supported imposing sanctions on Nord Stream 2, according to reporting by my Post colleague John Hudson, but were overruled by the White House. So did most Senate Democrats — at least until this week. By enforcing loyalty and deftly working the Hill, the White House might have won the domestic political battle in Washington. Unfortunately, that small victory might come at the cost of giving Putin a much more significant one.

This material is distributed by Yorktown Solutions, LLC on behalf of the All-Ukrainian Industry Association “Federation of Employers of the Oil and Gas Industry.” Additional information is available at the Department of Justice, Washington, D.C.

Opinion by Josh Rogin

Josh Rogin is a columnist for the Global Opinions section of The Washington Post. He writes about foreign policy and national security. Rogin is also a political analyst for CNN. He previously worked for Bloomberg View, the Daily Beast, Foreign Policy, Congressional Quarterly, Federal Computer Week and Japan's Asahi Shimbun newspaper.  Twitter



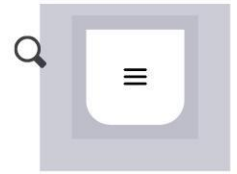
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We want to remind the great powers that there are no minor incursions and small nations. Just as there are no minor casualties and little grief from the loss of loved ones. I say this as the President of a great power



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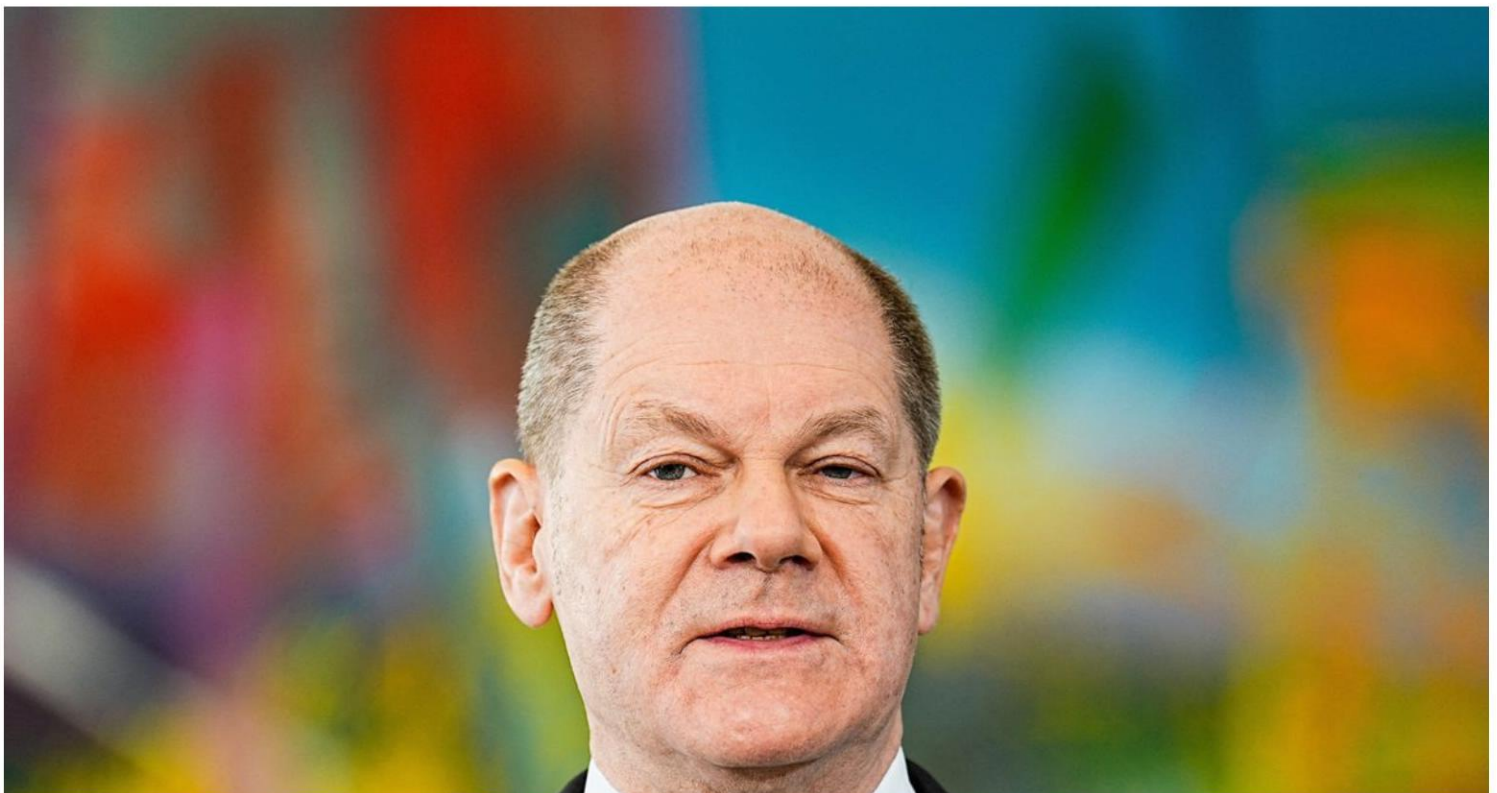
January 21, 2022 · 6:27 AM EST  
Last Updated an hour ago

**Europe**

# German chancellor turned down Biden invite to discuss Ukraine crisis - Der Spiegel

Reuters

1 minute read





German Chancellor Olaf Scholz gives a statement before a cabinet enclosure at the Chancellery to lay out and discuss Germany's policy plans for its G7 presidency in Berlin, Germany, January 21, 2022. Michael Kappeler/Pool via REUTERS

BERLIN, Jan 21 (Reuters) - German Chancellor Olaf Scholz turned down an invite at short notice from U.S. President Joe Biden to discuss the Ukraine crisis, German magazine Der Spiegel said on Friday.

Scholz did not accept the invitation due to a full schedule, including a trip to Madrid, as well as the desire to show that he was present as Germany grapples with the COVID-19 pandemic, according to Der Spiegel.

A government spokesman declined to comment on the report.

Both sides hoped now to organize a meeting by mid-February.


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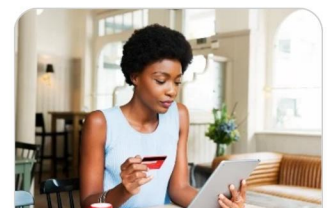
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